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ABSTRACT

This study used case study methodology to examine the experiences and the impact of participating in cross-race mentoring relationships for two African American students and their assigned/formal mentors at a predominantly white institution of higher education. These stories are presented to elucidate the mentoring process and to provide new perspectives on theories of academic and social integration. Particular attention is given to race-specific aspects of these mentoring relationships. Findings suggest that assigned or formal mentoring relationships move through phases of development that are similar to those of unassigned mentoring relationships. The development of trust in such relationships takes time and can have a significant effect on the academic integration of African American students at predominantly White institutions. Findings show that those engaged in formal mentoring can have valuable input to enhance education programming for students of color. (Contains 36 references.) (SLD)

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Mentoring across race: Critical case studies of African American Students in a Predominantly White Institution of Higher Education

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The descriptors African American and Black are used interchangeably throughout this text.

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Introduction

African American students who attend Predominantly White Institutions also referred to as PWIs are confronted with a formidable task. That is, they are expected to enter many of these colleges and universities, historically closed to their foremothers and forefathers less than fifty years ago, academically and socially integrate (Griffin, 1992; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1979, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993) into the mainstream fabric of these institutions, matriculate in a timely fashion and be prepared to enter graduate and professional schools or embark upon careers in corporate arenas. The academic and professional success of many African American college students has been directly correlated with being selected or chosen by individuals who assist them with making a smooth transition from high school to college (Allen, 1985, 1988, 1992; Blackwell, 1987a; Griffin, 1992; Lee, 1999). These individuals also referred to as mentors, assist African American students in matriculating successfully through the higher educational system. The presence of mentors is often paramount in African American student success in college and beyond, particularly for those attending in predominantly White colleges and universities (Allen, 1985, 1988, 1992; Blackwell, 1987a; Fleming, 1984; Epps, 1972; Griffin, 1992; Nettles, 1988).

While there are a plethora of studies that address the experiences of African American students enrolled in PWIs (Allen, 1985, 1988, 1992; Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1996; Fleming, 1984; Griffin, 1992; Lee, 1999), there remains a paucity of empirical research that examines the mentoring experiences of diverse students, specifically African American students in Predominantly White Institutions (Blackwell, 1987; Philip, 1993; Ugbah & Williams, 1989; Wallace & Abel, 1997; Wilson, 1994). On predominantly White campuses, it seems imperative to examine the mentoring experiences of African American students, who are involved in mentoring relationships, and more specifically students who may be mentored by non-Black or White faculty and staff and the myriad issues that may exist in the context of cross-race mentoring (Dreher and Cox, 1996; Lee, 1999; Thomas, 1989; Tillman, 1995). Higher education statistics report that on

predominantly White campuses, only thirteen percent of the faculty is of color, with African American faculty representing approximately five percent of total faculty of color teaching in colleges and universities across the United States. However, the majority of African American faculty teaches in Historically Black Colleges and Universities, where less than one fourth of the African American college student population is enrolled (Blackwell, 1987; National Center for Education Statistics, 1995; Nettles & Perna, 1997). Because of the large presence of African American students in PWIs and the limited presence of African American faculty, it is realistic to assume that if African American students are in fact mentored that faculty and staff that is not African American may mentor them.

This paper utilizes case study methodology to critically examine the experiences and the impact of participating in cross-race mentoring relationships for two African American students and their assigned/formal mentors at a Predominantly White Institution of higher education. The stories of the students and their mentors are presented in an effort to better understand and identify various aspects of the mentoring process, as well as to provide new perspectives on theories of academic and social integration in the context of African American student experiences at PWIs and the significance of race. Particular attention is given to the race specific aspects of these mentoring relationships, particularly the ways in which they are negotiated despite some of the challenges presented with regard to issues of race and racism in higher education.

Review of related literature

Mentoring and African American students in Predominantly White Institutions

Scholars agree that the process of mentoring assists individuals during their early adult lives in making major life transitions and developing positive identities (Blackwell, 1987; Levinson et al., 1978; Ugbah and Williams, 1989). The institutionalization of mentoring as a formal or assigned programmatic initiative is one means higher education, particularly Predominantly White Institutions, has sought to positively influence the undergraduate experiences (e.g., retention; degree completion;

and satisfaction with college life) of African American and other students of color (Allen, 1988; Allen, Epps and Haniff, 1991a; Jacobi, 1991; Merriam, Thomas and Zeph, 1987; Ugbah and Williams, 1989). The academy has adapted the corporate model of mentoring as a means by which to enhance the academic and personal success of African American and other students of color particularly those enrolled in Predominantly White Institutions.

Despite the extensive support mentoring has received even on a national level, because of its context-specific nature, programmatic and funding demands (Bey and Holmes, 1992), institutionalizing the practice particularly for underrepresented groups presents a challenge for colleges and universities committed to the success of its entire population of students. Both the concept and the process of mentoring, although extensively researched, remain elusive phenomena, in which "no universally accepted definition" exists (Wunsch, 1994, p. 2). However, the mentoring process continues to be an institutional practice in the academy, not only to integrate women and people of color, but also to facilitate the academic and social integration and overall quality of higher educational experience of African American students attending Predominantly White Institutions (Griffin, 1992; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1979, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1993).

African American students on predominantly White college and university campuses are often the target group of various outreach initiatives such as mentoring, since it has it has been shown that these students' experiences continue to be racialized or contextualized by the significance of race in American society (Allen, 1988, 1992; Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1996; Lang, 1992). Racialized and racist experiences scholars agree, directly affect the achievement and psychosocial development of African American students in general and African American students in predominantly White campus environments in particular (Allen, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1996; Lomotey, 1990). Moreover, because of feelings of isolation in PWIs, a disproportionate number of African American students lag behind their White counterparts in areas such as academic achievement, persistence, and post-graduate study (Allen, 1992; Astin, 1975, 1982; Blackwell, 1987;

Fleming, 1984; Griffin, 1992; Lomotey, 1990; Tinto, 1987, 1993).

Types of mentoring relationships: Informal and formal

Mentoring relationships as discussed in the research literature are represented in informal and formal contexts. In her review of mentoring literature in the context of undergraduate academic success, Jacobi (1991) argues that the extent of informal mentoring in educational settings is unknown. Studies such as Levinson et al. (1978), Philips-Jones (1982) and Kram (1983), have each examined the prevalence of mentoring in a classical sense. Informal or classical mentoring, Levinson et al. (1978) contend, is based on mutual attraction between the mentor and protégé. They argue that this attraction leads to the development of the relationship and the mentoring relationship progressing through various stages (e.g. initiation; cultivation; separation; redefinition) (Kram, 1983). As these stages evolve the mentor takes genuine interest in and responsibility for the protégé's growth and development. Blackwell (1983) terms this type of mentoring true mentoring, which he says can only occur when mentors willingly assume multiple functions and roles in the interest of the academic and subsequent career development of protégés. Critical aspects of choice and selection are inherent in the development of informal or classical Levinsonian mentoring relationships (Daloz, 1986, 1999; Tillman, 1995).

By contrast, formal or assigned mentoring relationships are based upon the goal of a particular program (Murray, 1991). In colleges and universities, the goal may be retention of students of color and mentors might be assigned in to part help facilitate that process. By definition, formal or:

> [f]acilitated mentoring is a structure or series of processes designed to create effective mentoring relationships, guide the desired behavior change of those involved; and evaluate the results for the protégés, the mentors and the organization. (Murray, 1991 quoted in Tillman, 1995, p. 12)

Carden (1990) describes formal mentoring as an environmental intervention that has been utilized in both corporate and academic settings. She identifies several corporations, colleges and universities across the United States that have established formal mentoring programs, sometimes in response to affirmative action mandates and also as a means of providing a measure of equal access and opportunity to resources for people of color and women. Formal mentoring is not without its problems however. Because of the nature of relationships and human interaction that ultimately become mentor-protégé relationships, assigning or matching by third party program administrators may cause more harm than good for both mentor and protégé (Alleman, 1989; Carden, 1990; Hunt and Michael, 1984; Noe, 1988; Philips-Jones, 1983; Zey, 1984, 1989). Despite this caution, proponents of formal mentoring stress the benefits of such a process particularly for people of color and women who are often on the periphery of corporate and academic environments (Chao, Walz and Gardener, 1992). Formal mentoring, they contend, is one means of assuring the development of diverse talent which may otherwise go uncultivated resulting in negative consequences not only for the individual but also for the institution and society at large (Carden, 1990; Dreher and Cox, 1996; Kanter, 1977; Noe, 1988; Thomas, 1989; Tillman, 1995).

Formal mentoring and undergraduate students

Formal mentoring programs developed in the interest of undergraduate student academic and social integration represent one way that higher education is attempting to institutionalize the implicit and explicit benefits gained from classical mentoring relationships. Jacobi (1991) argues that formal mentoring programs have begun to permeate universities and colleges as large-scale university-wide programs or smaller scale discipline-specific programs and have become a tremendous practice in higher education. She argues that formal mentoring programs have been utilized in higher education to address an array of issues related to student development such as career and leadership development; retention or academic success among students at risk for failure or attrition; community building among peers in the university community (Jacobi, 1991). Although the practice of

mentoring continues at a rapid pace in the academy, little systematic study of the mentoring process exists to access its impact on participants or the institution at large (Jacobi, 1991; Noe, 1988). Cosgrove's (1986) evaluation of a mentoring-transcript program is an important study of formal mentoring and its impact on the academic success of undergraduates. Cosgrove (1986) found that students who participated in the mentoring-transcript program had a higher level of satisfaction and development than those that did not participate. Jacobi (1991) contends that the Cosgrove's (1986) study is by far one of the "strongest methodological efforts to systematically assess the effects of a formal mentoring program" (p. 517).

Jacobi (1991) argues that because of the diversity in formal mentoring programs as they relate the interaction between the mentor and protégé; goals and objectives of initiating office or institution; voluntary or involuntary participation among mentors and protégés; monetary incentives for the mentor, it is difficult to systematically study the outcomes of the process on behalf of the participants. Similarly, Bey and Holmes (1992) argue that the diversity of formal mentoring programs is in fact one of the ways in which the process can be effective, although it is difficult to capture the process systematically as Jacobi (1991) also contends. They each assert that formal mentoring initiatives must be context-specific lest they are doomed for failure. Institutions and initiating offices must take into consideration the population for whom the program is being initiated and recognize the specific goals and objectives necessary to meet the needs of this particular population and the ways in which mentoring can facilitate the process (Bey and Holmes, 1992; Noe, 1988).

Mentoring and African American students in Predominantly White Institutions:

The significance of race

Race continues to be a significant issue in the education of African Americans and other students of color, particularly those attending PWIs. Blackwell (1987) cites economic barriers that plague African American families seeking educational opportunities for their children. They include

high rates of unemployment, low levels of income enabling support for higher education, low occupational status, limited access to scholarships and fellowships, and fear of indebtedness resulting from student loan programs. In a similar context, Lang (1992) cites both social and economic barriers that African American students face when seeking higher education. Lang (1992) argues that the academic preparation of Black students for higher education, the availability of family resources and access to institutional financial-aid resources, and institutional barriers to access directly influence enrollment and retention of African American students at PWIs (Lang, 1992).

Similar to the findings of Blackwell (1987) and Lang (1992), Feagin (1992) posits that the racial climate is a barrier that often affects the retention of African American students in PWIs. Feagin (1992) studied 180 Black students across the United States utilizing qualitative case studies. He found that African American students often feel stereotyped and perceived as unintelligent, unmotivated, and incapable of succeeding in the university environment. These perceptions he argues lead to social isolation and a miserable college experience for many African American students. Social isolation can keep Black students on the periphery of their educational experience. This alienation creates not only social difficulties for African American students, but academic difficulties as well. Feagin (1992) attributes this hostile racial climate to a White college subculture that is ingrained with elements of discrimination and racism thus, creating an uncomfortable and non-conducive living and learning environment for African American students on predominantly White campuses (Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1997).

Cross-race mentoring and African American students in Predominantly White Institutions

Few studies have examined the dynamics of cross-race mentoring (Dreher and Cox, 1996; Mertz, 1989; Thomas, 1989, 2001; Tillman, 1995). Thomas (1989, 2001) argues that race directly affects not only who is chosen to participate in the mentor-protégé relationship, but also the degree to which the relationship develops. Thomas (1989, 2001) contends that cross-race mentoring often evokes a history of racial taboos that precludes most often African American protégés and White

male mentors from getting beyond stereotyped perceptions of each other. The complication becomes more pronounced he argues, when White men mentor African American women. Because of historical discourses of sexual promiscuity and desire that underlie the ways in which African American women and White men interact cross-race/cross-gender mentoring relationships are extremely complex because of these race and gender related difficulties. Potential mentors and protégés as well as those in the professional culture sometimes scrutinize the interaction. Thomas (1989) states:

> ...[M]odern day corporate relationships reproduce the feelings associated with the primitive dynamics of race relations. White men appropriate black women, black women can rise up by going along with this, and black men are angry and suspicious. (p. 282)

Thomas (1989) further contends that the White male and female mentors he interviewed rarely addressed the issue of race and the way in which it impacted the mentoring relationship or the potential mobility of their protégé. Instead participants made no reference to the historical legacy of racial tension between African Americans and Whites that might prohibit them from getting along in general and in developing sustained mentoring relationships in particular (Thomas, 1989). In a recent study on corporate mentoring, Thomas (2001) confirmed previous findings regarding the challenges and complexities involved in cross-race mentoring relationships. He argues that the development of cross-race mentoring relationships must be regarded as distinct from same-race mentoring. Issues including but not limited to: negative stereotyping of people of color; the significance of role modeling; the impact of peer/colleague resentment and the development and successful management of networks were all recurring themes in Thomas' (2001) study.

Mertz (1989) also studied cross-race and cross-gender mentoring relationships and discovered findings similar to those of Thomas (1989). She argues that African American and other protégés of color involved in mentoring relationships with White males or females were considered by their mentors to be developmentally below the level of their White counterparts in their abilities

in the same corporate setting. In her analysis of data from an African American protégé with a White male mentor, Mertz (1989) argues that African American protégés often recognize that Whites in corporations or other professional environments will never see them as equal, and that combined with a history of institutional racism will invariably inhibit the professional development of African Americans in professional settings.

The findings of both Thomas (1989, 2001) and Mertz (1989) concur with regard to the lack of awareness of racialized experiences for African American and other protégés in the corporate environments that they studied. They each found a sense of denial of the often negative experiences of their protégés many times by their mentors as it related to issues of race (Mertz, 1989; Thomas, 1989). Both conclude that neither individuals nor corporations will experience the full benefits of the mentoring process as long as issues of race are not addressed and dealt with openly and honestly. Because higher education has borrowed its mentoring models from the corporate sector, it has been wrought with the same challenges in the sustained development of cross-race mentoring relationships. This research provides some analysis for this under researched area, as well as some suggestions for the ways in which colleges and universities can assist African American students and potential mentors, particularly White mentors with an understanding of how they might impact the academic and social integration and overall higher educational experiences of African American students in PWIs.

Theoretical framework

The mentoring experiences of formally mentored African American students as told by the students themselves and their mentors are examined in part through the theoretical lens of academic and social integration, a model that has had a significant impact on higher education retention research (Griffin, 1992; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1979, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993). The concept of academic and social integration was first introduced by Vincent Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) in his seminal quantitative research study on college student attrition. Primarily utilizing White

college students as his study population, Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) found that sufficient levels of academic and social integration must occur if undergraduate students are to matriculate successfully through graduation. Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) defines academic integration as the degree to which students identify with the institution's academic requirements and effectively utilize tutorial and other programs that provide academic assistance. Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) defines social integration as the degree to which students identify with the social characteristics of the institution. Peer interaction, social adjustment and interaction within the university are the primary tenets associated with social integration. To the extent that undergraduate students meet the criteria associated with academic and social integration, Tinto and others such as Griffin, 1992, Kraemer, 1997; and Pascarella and Terenzini, 1979, 1980 argue that students will likely persist through graduation.

In addition to understanding the significant impact of academic and social integration of African American student retention, many colleges and universities have established formal mentoring programs not only to aid in the academic and social integration of African American students, particularly those in PWIs but also in an effort to counter alienating or racist experiences of African American students on predominantly White college campuses (Allen, 1988; Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1996). Some researchers argue however, that formal mentoring programs are simply band-aid approaches to more systemic problems of racism in predominantly White campus environments (Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1996; Philip, 1993). In response to this apprehension, many formal mentoring programs have at their core, an acknowledgment of the experiences of African American students at PWIs, particularly with regard to the significance of race (Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera & Imani, 1996).

In response to academic and social integration, the theoretical framework of this study is also based on the ways in which race and racism impact the experiences of African American students attending Predominantly White Institutions in particular, and African Americans in the larger society in general. Drawing upon historical and contemporary theories of race, this study applies those

historical theories to construct theories around race and racism in higher education, in the context of African American student mentoring in a Predominantly White Institution. In particular, the theoretical frame serves to connect racialized and racist experiences of people of African descent to the legacy of slavery and even more so, those that use the American system of education as the primary unit of analysis.

To this end, DuBois' (1903) notion of double consciousness and the way in which African American people operate as outsiders within American culture "ever feel[ing] his twoness [as] an American, a Negro" is relevant (p. 215). DuBois' prophetic notion of the Color Line as the symbolic separation between African American and White culture is also relevant as it speaks directly to the African American students attempt to negotiate their peculiar existence on predominantly White campuses. In a similar context, Carter G. Woodson's (1933) theory of psychological oppression through the perpetuation of racial stereotypes and culturally denigrating or silencing curriculum helps to shape the theoretical framework for this study, making both historical and contemporary connections to the experiences of African American students in PWIs.

Not only does this paper and its corresponding theoretical framework concern itself with participants' mentoring experiences, but also the ways in which these students attempt to negotiate the system of higher education as one that is often oppressive and serves as a cultural apparatus of the larger social structure (Spanos, 1993). By this I mean, the system of higher education primarily serves to reproduce and perpetuate the status quo, rather than reorganize existing social structures in the interest of all students. To this end, more contemporary analyses of race and other interdisciplinary approaches to examining race and racism are also considered. This paper argues that African American students attending Predominantly White Institutions often experience hostile racial climates and are invisible and misrecognized (Feagin, Vera, Imani, 1997). Despite some of the positive effects of participating in mentoring relationships and they way in which the mentoring process serves as a buffer to counter negative experiences, these experiences occur nonetheless

(Allen, 1988; Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1997; Fleming, 1984).

There are often disputing findings in the literature on African American student mentoring experiences in PWIs. Some studies suggest that if African American students are properly mentored then they will persist through graduation and their quality of experience will be invariably positively impacted (Carden, 1990; Chao, Walz and Gardener, 1992; Cosgrove, 1986; Jacobi, 1991). Other studies (Allen, 1988; Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1997; Fleming, 1984) argue the contrary. These findings strongly contend that regardless of positive mentoring experiences at PWIs, African American students are consistently confronted with issues of race and racism in these colleges and universities. These are significant findings since mentors and the larger university must also understand the racial complexities in which African American students in PWIs are faced.

Methodology

Study site, program history and sample selection

The study site for this research was a formal mentoring program for students of color at a large research university in the Midwestern region of the United States. The university's Office of Minority Affairs housed the Mentoring Program. The program was initiated in 1987 to address issues of retention for African American freshman and was expanded in 1991 to include all domestic ethnic minority students and to implement more academically focused programming. Program participants included domestic ethnic minorities (e.g. African, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American). Participation in the Mentoring Program typically included between 600 and 800 student participants and 200-300 volunteer mentors.

While participation in the Mentoring Program was voluntary, freshman domestic ethnic minority students were the target population and strongly encouraged to participate. In order to facilitate the formal mentor matching of peer (upper class students of color) and professional (faculty, administrative staff and graduate students) student participants provided program administrators with background information regarding their academic, personal and professional

interests. Students also gave graduate student administrators and Directors written permission to monitor their academic progress on a quarterly basis. Peer and professional mentor volunteers provided general contact information and their specific academic and professional areas on program applications. Mentors committed to the program and their assigned student/mentee for at least one academic year, however many mentor participants remained in the program for subsequent years, continuing to develop their current mentoring relationship as well as working with incoming freshman students.

The sample selection for this paper was drawn from a larger qualitative research study, which examined the mentoring experiences of a cohort of African American students involved in the Mentoring Program at the university. The previous study sample included fourteen mentees and their eleven assigned mentors (two peer and nine professional) for a total of twenty-five participants. Program participants during the 1995-96; 1996-97; 1997-98 and 1998-99 academic years were included in the larger study. The current study sample includes two mentoring teams, one African male mentored by a White male faculty member and one African American female mentored by a White female faculty member and utilizes a case study approach to examine the phenomena of cross-race mentoring.

Data collection and analysis

Data collection for the larger research study included observations, individual and focus group interviews and occurred over a six-month period between the months of August 1999 and January 2000. Once interview transcripts were reviewed, several student and mentor participants were re-interviewed during January and February 2000 for clarity and further researcher interpretation. Because this paper is concerned with the dynamics of cross-race mentoring relationships case study methodology was utilized to examine two cross-race mentoring cases in more depth than the previous study allowed.

To this end, case study analysis provides insight and better understanding of cross-race

mentoring (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Stake, 2000). By studying the particular, in this case two mentoring pairs matched across race, this study presents through thick description and detailed analysis a basis for understanding the phenomena of cross-race mentoring. In this regard, case study methodology invites readers into the everyday lives of the researched, while providing a means for connecting findings to the specific phenomena under analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Stake, 2000). Much can be learned in our study of the particular and case study methodology compels this type of introspection to occur, specifically by drawing inferences from a small purposeful sample. Such understandings might enable the academic community in general, student and mentors in cross-race relationships in particular to more fully understand the dynamics of cross-race mentoring through the voices and stories of others engaged in these types of relationships.

Cross-race mentoring cases

The proceeding section of the paper presents two cross-race mentoring cases. It employs a narrative approach in order to provide necessary context for understanding the case itself and follows data presentation suggestions for case studies (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Stake, 2000). For example discussion of the initiation and cultivation phases of the relationships are presented in narrative form to demonstrate the ways in which these particular mentoring relationships developed. Narrative presentation is followed by a discussion of the cases' emergent themes, particularly those that were directly related to major issues in mentoring, academic and social integration, and race and racism in higher education. These categories and corresponding themes are illuminated and subsequently connected to the participants' mentoring stories.

Ron and Stuart

During the time of the research study, Ron was a Senior Business major from Akron, Ohio who came to Ohio State knowing that he wanted to major in business, specifically accounting. Stuart, Ron's mentor during the 1997-1998 academic year is a White male faculty member in the Business College whose teaching and research is in the area of international business and markets.

At the beginning of our conversation Ron conceptualized the mentoring process. He stated that a mentor is:

> **Kind of like a guide, somebody to help me stay on the right track and help me. Someone who not only listens but offers advice in times of you know just down times. [They] might make it a little bit easier to get from point A to point B because they already know all the ins and outs of the university. [A mentor is] somebody you can count on.**

Ron further characterized his relationship with both Stuart and another unassigned African American male mentor stating:

> **Well I've been invited to both of their homes and spent time fellowshipping with others with them and other friends of theirs and just personal talks not always formal. You know what I mean?**

Ron continued our exchange saying:

> **...now [this university] hasn't been easy you know...I've often times considered maybe I don't want to do this or maybe I don't want to do that and just start over...He's [Stuart] never really dictated...do this or do that. He's just always supportive. "Wow Ron, that sounds like a good idea, go do that."... Like every idea I have he's like, okay that's great, go do it!"**

Stuart addressed his role in helping Ron solidify his choice of an academic major.

> **He was always going to be a business major. I don't think there was any doubt in his mind that that was what he was going to do. I suppose knowing me might have solidified in his mind that this was a good choice.**

Ron's conceptualization of mentoring and characterization of his relationship with Stuart confirms findings in the literature that suggest that mentoring relationships move through various phases with the development of trust being a critical component as the relationship matures. Kram

(1983) names these phases initiation; cultivation; separation; and redefinition. As Ron made reference to the initiation and cultivation phases recurring themes such as listening and developing trust emerged as important aspects of developing the mentoring relationship from his perspective. Spending time in informal rather than formal settings also had an impact, another confirmation of the role of faculty-student interaction in overall student retention and satisfaction with college life (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin,. 1992; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1978, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993).

Stuart, Ron's mentor elaborates on the way in which he and Ron's relationship developed. This dialogue is characterized also as part of the initiation and cultivation or development phases of the mentoring relationship in which participants began their relationships and also includes those aspects that contributed to the sustained development of the relationship. Cultivating or developing the mentoring relationship was a critical stage whereby once the relationship had been initiated in this case between Ron and Stuart, each participant worked together toward establishing various relationship goals, many of which were in Ron's best academic and professional interest. Stuart provided some insight regarding how he chose to cultivate the relationship with Ron. He said:

> **I think Ron knows that I have some very close friendships with African Americans in Columbus. I've referred him to a couple of my close friends who have helped him in one way or another. We went to church where one of my really close friends goes to church over at Reymah Christian Church. It's a rock and roll big ole fantastic mostly African American...not totally. There are some pretty interesting people, who are of European descent who are also members of the congregation. And we went to church there and after that we went out to dinner with the extended family of these friends of mine. I think that contributed to the trust that we built over time...I think early on the fact that he invited me into his living quarters and that I regularly visited him there and he felt comfortable and I felt comfortable after a period of time...And he's visited my home several times. I think those are some of the pieces.**

The fact that Stuart shared his life beyond that of a university faculty member by inviting Ron to attend a predominantly African American church, extended his network of friends, particularly those who were African American and consistently visited Ron "in his living quarters" all seemed to contribute to the cultivation of the relationship and more importantly the trust that Ron and Stuart built over time. Moreover, both Ron and Stuart's comments demonstrated Stuart as a professional mentor who provided advice and guidance as well as encouragement as indicated by them both. Providing advice, guidance and encouragement are major components in developing and sustaining successful mentoring relationships. Moreover, these components help to instill confidence in mentees to set and reach goals and as Ron said to "Go do it!"

Mentoring, academic and social integration

The following presentation of Ron and Stuart's mentoring story addresses two major categories that emerged from the analysis of their case: mentoring and academic integration and mentoring and social integration. Academic and social integration as discussed by Ron and Stuart emerged as broad categories during data analysis, subcoding and further categorizing. Tinto's (1993) academic and social integration model and its corresponding tenets were applied in an effort to examine its applicability for this cross-race mentoring relationship. The proceeding section describes the ways in which Ron and Stuart's mentoring relationship in some way facilitated Tinto's (1975, 1987, 1993) criteria for academic and social integration.

Mentoring and academic integration

Student/faculty interaction

Student interaction with faculty outside of the classroom in less formal settings the professional literature suggests (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1978, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993) is the most likely predictor of college student school persistence. Assigned mentoring relationships, such as Ron and Stuart's provided a vehicle for both student mentees and faculty mentors with not only increased the access to one another, but also increased

opportunity to interact on a more informal basis. The data presented here displays the interaction between Ron and Stuart regarding their informal interaction within the mentoring relationship.

Ron: ...This colleague of his...matter of fact I went to dinner with Stuart, his significant other, and his best friend and his wife. We all went out. I think it was to breakfast.

Interviewer: What was it like? Did you have a good time? Was it comfortable?

Ron: Yeah I didn't think anything of it. I was like hey we're all buddies here eating. I didn't feel like I looked like a kid. I felt like one of the gang and it was cool.

Stuart discussed how he provided Ron with opportunities for student/faculty interaction:

I've been able to suggest people that he should go see. I have talked with him about the honors program...When he'd stop by my office, there would be Ph.D. students that would stop by and I would introduce him to them and they would talk. So he has enlarged his contacts in the academic community that way.

Study skills

Student study skills were an important component of their academic integration into the university. Ron and Stuart shared their thoughts:

Ron: My study skills are...Let's see...I get frantic when I think I'm going to fail. So I might be all easy going like well I'm a get this done this and that. Well I got a C, then it's like ah man then I get all frantic. But like I said, I work [and] my time is real limited. Let's just get it done. I look at [it] like this needs to get done.

Stuart: ...His study skills were good when he came. And Ron is not interested in a lot of things at the university like sports. He's not a big sports nut. And that's one thing when you have a mentee you can't make any assumptions of what they're interested in. It's run the whole gamut with my mentees. And he has no interest in sports at all. During a...football game he'll be down in the library. He segments his life so that he

studies and then on the weekends he plays. But he doesn't play all the weekend. And that's a good balance...But then during his sophomore year all of these other activities started to intervene. And now he said he's moved off campus. And he said, "I've got to get back to the same way I did." And I'm quite sure he will.

Academic assistance

In addition to study skills Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993), Griffin (1992) and others reported that students who sought out and effectively utilized various types of academic assistance served as a means of their successful academic integration into the university. Ron talked about his seeking academic assistance.

Well, if I need help I make friends. You know I might not know who the smartest one is in the class but I will go ahead and make my analysis...You look like you know everything in class. We're about to be study partners. And I ask them well listen man. I probably won't say I'm having problems but I would be like you want to study? You know or something like that.

Ron's use of peer studying was an important aspect of his seeking academic assistance, specifically since it is often peers who can assist one another in the classrooms' academic environment. Ron's caution in not saying he was "having problems" was another important finding, since many African American students, particularly those in PWIs do not seek academic assistance because they fear that they will be looked at as less intelligent than their White counterparts. Although Ron's caution indicated some concern, it did not deter him from working with a peer as a "study partner" who may have provided the necessary academic assistance.

Mentoring and social integration

Social isolation

Social isolation Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) and others have argued is an issue that can impact the successful social integration of students and ultimately influence their decision to remain at a

particular college or university. Griffin (1992) and others have contended that African American students in predominantly White college and university environments reported social isolation as a major reason why they chose to leave a particular university. They have further suggested that many did not have quality experiences at the college or university they attended. Data in this section addressed the subcategory of social isolation from both student/mentee and mentor perspectives. This section emphasized the ways in which African American students often experience social isolation in a predominantly White university environment from Ron's perspective.

Ron explained how he experienced social isolation when he first arrived at the university:

I was pretty independent in high school and at home and I took the same role when I got here. One thing that I did notice right off is that there are so many different cultures here but they don't really interact that much...maybe on the professional level [but] not that much socially...So I found myself even though I am on this huge campus [which is] like a city. I found myself kind of clustered in certain areas.

When asked about whether or not he was socially comfortable at the university, Ron stated:

It's not just...I shouldn't say them, it's me too cause I just don't feel comfortable. It just doesn't seem like the norm. Like hey, I'm gonna go to the [university] football game and hang out, but I look around and I'm like where's the rest of my people, you know...It just doesn't feel the same...The football game is supposed to be the epitome of [university] entertainment. We are a big football school. I don't think any minorities take pride in [it] even though it's like a huge pride for the university.

Ron reported his experience with social isolation on a number of different levels. He addressed this issue from the perspective of an African American male at the university. He said he felt he was "clustered" in certain areas in order to be socially accepted. He was discontented with football as a source of "huge pride" for the university and the "epitome of university entertainment." He stated that he doesn't take pride in university football and wonders if he did attend a game why

individuals who share his same cultural identity were not in attendance.

Stuart provided the following example regarding Ron's social isolation:

> **...One of his big concerns when he arrived here was that he felt that African American, the freshman were kind of left out of the special events. He didn't feel that the musical events were geared toward freshman. And he said, "Where are the rap stars?" There's nobody here...To some degree in the freshman year I think he felt a bit disconnected. I think he did. And he was kind of exploring what it's like to be in a largely White institution but which also has a big African American community. He's never had that before.**

Both Ron and Stuart discussed Ron's feelings of social isolation at the university. Although Stuart is a White male mentoring an African American male, he was able to empathize with Ron's plight as he "explor[ed] what it's like to be in a largely White institution." It was clear that Stuart helped Ron work through or at least express his feelings of social isolation at the university to someone who was genuinely concerned about his feelings and understood the impact of such social isolation on his overall academic and social integration.

Mentoring, race and racism

The topic of race and racism in mentoring relationships emerged as a subcategory and was particularly relevant in the analysis of Ron and Stuart's mentoring relationship as these issues were often addressed directly by each of them. Research literature finds that cross-race mentoring relationships may be faced with formidable challenges and may not provide the same value to students, since mentees and mentors have to deal with a multitude of issues with regard to developing their mentoring relationships, namely the complexities of race and racism and the ways in which the quality of an African American college students' experience can be negatively impacted as a result. Ron and Stuart provided a case specific lens on their mentoring relationship as it related to issues of race and racism.

Stuart: ...Ron is probably the first person who has...very honestly broached the issue of race. I've had this conversation with my mentees before about the fact that I'm White and they're African American but that's sort of at the beginning. Ron broached it quite a long ways into the relationship [asking], "What's this thing about race anyway?" But he approaches it quite differently than a lot of students that I've known before...the sort of cycle that you see with students is one of a sort of shock, which is followed by a radicalization for a while and a strong interest in things African and coming back to thinking about how the domestic situation unravels. But Ron doesn't...if he is in that sort of cycle he's at the very early stages but he incorporates some of the latter stages too.

Stuart followed with a discussion that he and Ron had about race:

And we talked about why people of European descent have a problem with race. Ron shared with me that he had been in an all Black elementary school and then his parents moved to the suburbs and that he was basically at an all White high school with a very very small minority there and we reflected on the differences between that. I finally suggested that he might enjoy doing some reading. And I often suggest this book <u>Parting the Waters</u>, which is about the Civil Rights Era. But in this case I had just gotten back from South Africa and I loaned him a copy of Mandela's autobiography...Because that's the stuff of heroism. I thought that if he read a bit of that, that maybe he would get to the point of thinking about some things that are African and how that fits into his worldview.

Stuart's assessment of Ron's movement through the various stages of identity represented a mentor who is knowledgeable about his role as a White male mentoring an African American male. Because Stuart possessed awareness of some historical and contemporary issues relative to race, he was able to suggest specific reading material for Ron as points of reference so that

they could begin to make sense of as Ron described, "this thing about race," particularly in the context of their mentoring relationship. Moreover, Stuart's mention of his visit to South Africa is also important in this exchange, since his intercultural awareness and openness may have also contributed to his level of comfort with dealing with an African American male mentee. It is feasible to conclude that when mentors demonstrate the type of knowledge and comfort such as Stuart did with Ron they are likely to be successful in developing trust, which is critical in the development of mentoring relationships in general, cross-race mentoring relationships in particular.

Stuart also shared his involvement in a confrontation with Ron and the city's police department in which the issue of race was a point of contention from Ron's point of reference as an African American male.

We've just recently been involved in a situation with the Columbus police did he...I don't know if he mentioned that.

Interviewer: No, he didn't mention that.

Stuart: He was out at...a dance and the police basically roughed him up there. They called him and when he didn't instantly turn around, they grabbed him and he didn't much appreciate it...They slapped him with several charges.

Interviewer: Was there a fight at the club?

Stuart: I think it was a little bit of a scuffle. I don't think he was involved in it. But he is quietly angry. He is so angry. But he is a very controlled person in his emotional set up. So he has refused to plea bargain. He has refused all of the overtures from the police department. He's hired a lawyer and paid his own money to retain the lawyer. He's asked his parents not to be involved and he's taking it to trial. It's a big risk...We spent a long time talking about it. I'm serving as a character witness. I have been down to the so-called trial twice, but it has been postponed. His parents have come down. I met his parents and we have had lunch a couple of times. It's been very nice to

get to know them. But each of these cases, the start up of the entertainment business, this case he's confronted here, some of the conflicts he's had with roommates, he's shared these things with me and each time it has been up to me to trust him 100%, absolutely 100%.

The issue of race and mentoring as Stuart mentions is something that Ron approached him with directly. The level of trust that both Stuart and Ron have developed over the course of the relationship also enabled Ron to go to Stuart regarding his confrontation with the city's police department. The trust they shared as it related to not only their mentoring relationship, but also the complexities of race and racism as they impact the experiences of African American males is something that Stuart did not shy away from but chose to trust Ron 100%. Stuart's acknowledgment of Ron's silent anger seemed to also speak to his understanding of some of what Ron may be dealing with as an African American male who has to face the ways in which society chooses to deal with Black males who do not immediately comply with or respond to authority.

Sarah and Sharon

Sarah is a senior Journalism major from Columbus, Ohio. Sarah was formally matched with Sharon, a White female Associate Dean in the Business College during the 1996-1997 academic year. Part of Sharon's responsibilities as one of the Associate Deans in the Business College is to develop and effectively manage its diversity initiatives.

During our interview Sharon was asked to discuss how she viewed mentoring. She said:

a sort of comfort in being with that person [the mentor]...and sort of an understanding. I'm thinking of somebody who I have an ongoing kind of relationship with. Who is perhaps, looking out for my career and how I'm developing.

Mentoring and academic integration

Faculty/student interaction

With regard to the theme of faculty/student interaction Sarah said that Sharon provided her with the opportunity to meet and interact with other faculty in the Business College:

Sarah: **...basically I just told her what I was interested in and then she ran with it. She let me talk to the Marketing professors. Everybody seems to like her and talked to me as a favor to her and they were happy about doing that.**

Interviewer: **And you talked to them about your career interests?**

Sarah: **Career interests, what I was interested in, in this school and what I would have to do to get into this school.**

Interviewer: **And this is all your freshman year?**

Sarah: **Right.**

Sharon stated that she felt Sarah benefited as a result of working directly with a faculty member.

Sharon: **I think it was knowing she had somebody, a faculty member in administration that was in her court. If you know what I mean? That maybe it raised... unconsciously, I don't know, maybe her confidence level, her status level a little bit. I hate to talk in those terms but for a while she was finding her way on campus. And and I do think we had some good, fun conversations and I do think that I made her think about Business as a career. And what she'd need to do and what, how, where she'd need to go and but also, not to put limits on her aspirations...I think it made her feel good in a little bit of a way to know she had me and that, you know, she could go to this Associate Dean and knock on the door. [And hear], "Hey, Sarah how are you? ...I think she had more consciousness of that than perhaps some of the other students I worked with.**

Student/faculty interaction as reported by Sarah and Sharon had some impact on her

academic integration into the university. Their interaction was primarily related to Sarah's academic and professional interests. Not only did this interaction provide Sarah with direct access to a faculty member but also as a result of the formal mentoring relationship she was able to directly benefit from the resources Sharon provided. Without being assigned as mentoring pairs, it is highly probable that Sarah and Sharon would not have worked together outside of the classroom, if at all.

Academic assistance

Sarah spoke of her discomfort in seeking academic assistance in a foreign language class.

It seems like everybody in that class has been to Spain, has lived in Spain, has family that is Spanish or of Spanish descent...So I don't say anything in the class...I listen and I understand everything that is being said, but I don't say anything because I'm like, well all these people have been to Spain and I can't talk like they do you know. And I feel like I'm lost. I feel like I'm the only one that wouldn't be able to speak as well or understand as much.

Sarah's experience with academic dissonance in her foreign language classroom and reluctance to ask for assistance is not addressed by her mentor Sharon, though conceivably Sharon might have been able to offer Sarah some assistance or even encouragement. Sarah's sense of academic dissonance seems to also implicitly address issues of race, whereby she feels incompetent or unintelligent because many of her classmates have indicated that they have traveled or lived in Spanish speaking countries and she herself has not had this opportunity. Sarah's concern and discomfort is not uncommon since many African American students in PWIs have not had the same life experiences and subsequent exposure as their White colleagues. Such an internalization of feeling "not good enough" not only impacts African American students' academic integration, but also in Sarah's case the conscious choice not to address such an important academic concern with a mentor, who shares the racial identity and perhaps perspective that Sarah feels she is in direct conflict.

Mentoring and social integration

Student/student interaction

The subcategory student/student interaction falls under the category mentoring and social integration. It addresses the extent to which students identify with other students at the university and are comfortable interacting with peers on a number of different levels (Griffin, 1992; Tinto, 1987, 1993).

Sarah reported interacting with many of her friends from high school during her freshman year at the university.

> **I noticed a lot of my friends that I went to high school with are here in college with me. Not [the White high school], my Black high school. So we're kind of reunited again. But all of them are like experiencing a lot of culture shock. And I didn't go through that because I went to the White high school. So I don't know [if] it's kind of a little bit easier for**

me 'cause I'm used to it.

Although Sarah has the opportunity to be "reunited" with some of her friends from her "Black high school," she is concerned about the "culture shock" that they are experiencing as a result of being in a predominantly White university environment. The culture shock they are experiencing could create difficulty with her interaction with them although she had already established relationships with them since high school since the predominantly White environment is one that she has become accustomed. Sarah's discussion of student/student interaction is with other African American students. This was an important finding since the African American student population at the university research site is less than ten percent. If African American students' perception of their interaction with other students is only race-specific, their social integration into the university could be limited and thus not sufficient for their persistence. Despite Sarah and Sharon's positive mentoring experiences this situation could still impact Sarah's successful social integration at the university.

Social support

The creation of social and cultural networks is critical as it relates to the social integration of African American students in Predominantly White Institutions (Griffin, 1992). Involvement in student organizations, particularly those that students of color can identify with racially, often provides the necessary social support to positively impact African American students' social integration. This section addressed the various means of social support student participants engaged in and the ways in which they utilized university systems in their own interest.

Sarah reported on her experience as an African American female and developing networks of social support at the university:

...Being the minority, you have to kind of make your own way. And look for the help of other minorities...I mean there's a support system there in the majority too, but it's not as readily available to you. You...tend to look for people who are like you to help

you out some.

Also with regard to social support, Sarah reported on an annual African American social event at the university and how she was dismayed regarding the way that the university handled the African American versus a predominantly White social event:

> **...My first block party, it was bad the streets were blocked off...Everything was shut down, couldn't really go anywhere, couldn't really do anything. Streets blocked off, stuff like that. But, the U2 concert was the exact weekend after that [which] sold out the [stadium]. Me and my friend were down here that weekend just walking around campus. There were people everywhere and there were no police anywhere. And, I mean, the stadium...sits what 100,000 people? And they're just walking all over the street. And...there was like no policemen. And it was like the exact – it was seven days later...Police officers and the [city's] police department had to work. I did a story on that...and every [city] police officer was working that weekend. And um, I talked to a police officer and he said that they were doing it to protect us against the problems from kids in the city. He said the number one problem they have is not with the students, it's with other high school kids or kids in gangs or drug dealers, whatever from around the city...that come to the block party. So in a sense they feel they're protecting them from us – protecting us from them...I don't know that to be true. I mean that's probably what they tell Black police officers so they don't feel uncomfortable. But yeah, I don't know if I necessarily buy that...And I mean block party is supposed to be open to the community. A lot of events that the University, at least Black events, that the University or departments of the University sponsor are community based events. They aren't necessarily just for students and to say you're separating us...kinda makes me uncomfortable...I talked to the lady who was in charge of it last year and she was saying they had worked with different community groups to**

try to keep the gangs and a whole bunch of rift raft from over here. They worked with the police on getting a curfew for the younger kids. I mean, they were trying to do stuff, but still the police out populated everybody.

Sarah's feelings of betrayal from the university who chose to in her opinion to over-police block party, while not policing at all the U2 concert represented her lack of social support and ultimately feelings of social dissonance as an African American student in a predominantly White university environment. Her discussion of the event itself is made more complex by the intersection of race and the ways in which it impacted her everyday experience as African American student at a Predominantly White Institution.

Summary of findings and discussion

Ron and Stuart's, Sarah and Sharon's cross-race mentoring relationships are important to understanding both the general and the specific nuances involved in mentoring across race. In order to have explicit understanding of this phenomena, an in-depth and detailed analysis was utilized to uncover those issues that may be transferable to other mentoring and more specifically other cross-race mentoring relationships. The discussion that follows provides a general summary of findings as it relates to the topic of cross-race mentoring. The paper concludes with the study's implications and provides suggestions for future research on this very important area of study.

- Assigned or formal mentoring relationships function and move through similar phases of development as unassigned mentoring relationships.
- Assigned or formal mentoring requires that mentees and mentors work closely together throughout the initiation and cultivation phases of the relationship to develop necessary levels of trust.
- Development of trust enables mentors to perform functions in mentees' academic, personal and professional interest. Once levels of trust are established, mentees willingly accept the assistance of mentors.

The broad category, mentoring and academic integration, was examined through the tenets of Tinto's (1975, 1987, 1993) academic and social integration model. Findings here include subcategories of academic integration: 1) student/faculty interaction; 2) study skills; and 3) academic assistance. For the first subcategory, student interaction with faculty outside of the classroom in less formal settings, the literature suggests (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1978, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993) is the most likely predictor of college student persistence.

- Assigned mentoring relationships, provide a vehicle for student mentees and faculty mentors to have access to one another and increases their opportunity to interact in informal settings.
- Faculty mentors serve as catalysts and can significantly impact the academic integration of African American students in PWIs.
- The level of interaction that students and mentors reported would have not otherwise occurred if faculty mentors and students were not an assigned mentoring pair.
- Student/faculty interaction occurs on a number of different levels, from faculty providing academic advice, guidance and assistance, to reinforcing student potential, ability and self-esteem, components critical for successful student academic integration.

Similar to academic integration, the broad category, mentoring and social integration was also examined through the tenets of Tinto's (1975, 1987, 1993) academic and social integration model. Subcategories of social integration included: 1) student/student interaction; 2) social isolation; 3) satisfaction with college life; 4) social support; and 5) self-esteem (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993). Faculty help facilitate student social integration by serving as catalysts for enhanced student/student interaction; helping freshman students overcome feelings of social isolation; and assisting students with developing necessary networks of social support.

- Mentors serve an important role in helping students develop self-esteem, a necessary component for successful student social integration
- Self-esteem and positive self-image as discussed in the literature and confirmed by study participants served to facilitate the successful social integration as well as students' academic integration into the university environment. As student potential and achievements were reinforced through mentorship, student confidence in their own academic ability and their levels of efficacy in both academic and social situations were enhanced.

Race and racism in education became a salient topic of discussion with study participants and was also used both as the second component of the study's theoretical frame as well as a broad category which emerged as data were analyzed. By this I mean, student participants, Ron and Sarah discussed their cross-mentoring experiences, embedded in this discourse was the overall experience of being an African American student in a PWI. Additionally, mentors who spoke of their experiences with student participants also in many ways addressed issues of race and racism either implicitly or explicitly as they shared stories of their own experiences in higher education.

- Mentors and students, particularly those involved in cross-race mentoring relationships must deal openly and honestly with issues of race. If they do not, they risk under developing the mentoring relationship. African American students in PWIs are frequently confronted with issues of race and racism and their mentoring relationships need to serve, in part, as buffers which allow students to counter negative experiences with race and racism.

The student participants involved in this research study were in formal or assigned mentoring relationships. A common assumption made is that their experiences at a PWI are positively impacted as a result of their involvement in mentoring relationships. Yet, a significant literature base exists which suggests that regardless of positive mentoring experiences at PWIs, many African American students do not have quality educational experiences, particularly as they relate to race (Allen, 1992; Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991a; Blackwell, 1987b; Feagin, 1992).

In this regard, those that mentor African American students as well as other academic and administrative offices within the broader university must recognize the way in which race impacts these students' ways of being in scholarly communities in particular, and the world in general. By this I mean, the overall academic and social integration of African American students in PWIs is the responsibility of everyone at the university, and should not be the sole responsibility of offices that have been created to meet the needs of diverse students. Diversity initiatives in the African American student's best interest cannot occur in isolation of other university academic and administrative units, if they are to be worthwhile.

- Individuals mentoring African American students in predominantly White college and university settings must make attempts to find student-centered and culturally relevant means of initiating and sustaining the mentoring relationship or they risk stagnating the development of the relationship, which could negatively impact the relationship's overall success.
- Although mentors may not be aware of the immediate benefits of working with students, mentoring relationships often have cumulative affects and can positively impact the African American students' college experience over the course of their college careers and possibly beyond.
- Study participants as part of their lived experiences as African American students in a PWI articulated feelings of cultural dissonance. Despite positive interaction in many of their mentoring relationships, mentorship did not necessarily shelter students from feelings of dissonance. At a minimum however, mentorship might serve to counter student feelings of cultural dissonance by engaging students in relationships that are supportive of and sensitive to their cultural differences.

Conclusions

Mentoring is an important yet sometimes elusive topic. Individuals who mentor and who

have benefited from their participation in mentoring relationships often have difficulty articulating both the tangible and intangible aspects of the process, beyond the ways in which involvement in the relationship has made a difference in their personal and professional development. This paper was an attempt to examine the phenomena of cross-race mentoring in a less abstract sense, by describing what how the process unfolded for two African American students and their assigned mentors.

As an African American woman who has attended PWIs, the topic continues to resonate with me. As I worked directly with students, their mentors and program directors as a graduate administrator and researcher, I found that the research literature was limited in its examination of African American students' mentoring experiences. Due to this limited knowledge base, I felt that given both my personal and professional experience, I could engage in research that was meaningful to me as an advocate of equity in education and also to the higher education community that as one of the student participants described "doesn't always get it," with regard to the array of issues that exist for African American students attending PWIs.

The major findings of this research suggest that mentoring and African American student experiences at a PWI are interconnected. Examining these topics in concert provided a better understanding of the mentoring phenomena and the ways in which race was an interrelated and complex component for both the student and mentor participants. In this regard, the mentoring process must be defined by those directly engaged in the process. Researchers and practitioners alike have sometimes offered prescriptive programming as a means of influencing positive change, particularly programming in the interest of students of color. These findings indicate that those engaged in a formal mentoring initiative can provide invaluable input to enhance education programming for African American and other students of color.

The impact of faculty on student academic, personal and professional development was an important conclusion of this study, as shown by the cases presented. Not only did faculty involvement impact student development, but also faculty who served in a mentoring capacity

experienced indirect benefits as well. Mentoring interactions provided faculty with an opportunity to develop personal relationships with students in which limited classroom interaction often could not allow. Faculty mentors expressed both pride and disappointment regarding their students' successes and challenges. However, working closely with African American students provided mentors with better insights about their mentees' challenges, particularly those that were complicated by race. The next section details implications of the study for those engaged in academic and administrative aspects of higher education, especially those who maintain a commitment to educational equity.

Study implications and suggestions for future research

The implications of this study are intended for two primary audiences. First, because the research is set in a university environment, it has implications for higher educational institutions and those interested in the betterment of scholarly communities. Second, the implications extend further to those who are in any way involved in the education of African American students, particularly those being educated in predominantly White higher educational settings, as the experiences of the study's student participants were cumulative rather than limited to their experiences in higher education, especially their experiences with race and racism. I now turn to a discussion of the study's implications.

One of the overarching themes and implications of this study was the salience of race in the everyday educational experiences of African American students in PWIs. The institution of higher education and all of those who work with African American students must recognize this salience and move toward an understanding of what constitutes quality educational experiences for African American and other students of color, particularly those attending PWIs.

The impact of faculty involvement in African American student academic, personal and professional development has implications for higher education. Beyond the implication that faculty take an active role in student development, ideally serving in a mentoring capacity, it suggests that academic and administrative areas have something to gain by working together. Educational

programming initiatives such as formal mentoring programs often develop with out sufficient faculty input and involvement. In this regard, it is necessary to communicate across academic and administrative areas in order to develop and sustain programming in the student's best interest.

Institutions of higher education should consider well-developed formal mentoring programs as a means of enhancing African American student academic and social integration, as well as a means to counter these students' negative experiences with race and racism in PWIs. In developing mentoring programs with these foci, it is imperative that prospective participants be engaged in program development from its inception. Focus groups and surveys can serve program administrators well in establishing programming that allows potential participants input, ultimately meeting their needs and the institution at large.

Because faculty-student interaction plays a key role in African American student academic integration, it is imperative that faculty be compensated in some way for the time they spend with students outside of the classroom. Service is an elusive aspect of faculty responsibility that goes unrewarded beyond personal satisfaction, especially in large research institutions. The findings of this study suggested that the institution plays an integral role in fostering faculty-student interaction. To this end, higher education must find ways to reward faculty who go above and beyond their research and teaching responsibilities or their unspoken prescribed institutional role. Modification of the tenure process and its limited focus on service may serve as an appropriate vehicle to increase awareness and provide incentives for non-participating faculty, as well as reward faculty whose involvement positively impacts student development.

Research studies such as this one generate additional research questions to further our existing knowledge base and raise questions regarding what we know and do not know about particular phenomena. Studies that address the impact of faculty involvement on African American student academic, personal and professional development in the context of mentoring are sorely needed. Issues that need to be addressed include factors that contribute to faculty involvement, as

well as the impact of faculty involvement on African American student retention, degree completion and quality of experience. Longitudinal studies on faculty involvement and student matriculation can add significantly to existing research in this area and provide needed improvements. In addition, both quantitative and qualitative research studies are need to make improvement in higher education's service to students of color at PWIs.

The ways in which African American students in PWIs develop and utilize both assigned and unassigned mentoring resources in their own academic, personal and professional interest can add to our existing knowledge base on African American students' mentoring experiences. It is recommended that studies be conducted that investigate the outcomes of formal mentoring programs at PWIs focusing on African American student persistence, degree completion, academic performance in addition to the ways in which both their assigned and unassigned mentoring experiences impacted those outcomes. The results of such studies are likely to provide useful remedies to problems in this area of PWIs.

Research that addresses the salience of race in African American student experiences continues to add value to the ways in which higher education understands the peculiar experiences of African American students who attend PWIs. Potential studies could examine culturally relevant mentoring strategies that are employed by mentors who work with diverse groups of students. The study's focus would be on the specific strategies employed by those who mentor African American students and the impact of those strategies on African American student academic and social integration, successes as well as their overall satisfaction with higher education.

Given that mentoring can and should occur across race, gender, class and difference in general, research examining the specific nuances of cross-gender and cross-race mentoring relationships can add to the existing literature base on the development of mentoring relationships and the need for such components in mentoring programs. With regard to cross-race mentoring, the experiences of African American students who work with White faculty mentors warrant additional

study. Quantitative and qualitative studies might address factors that contribute to the success of the mentoring relationship, particularly the strategies employed by both students and mentors to deal with issues of race while developing and sustaining a relationship in the academic, personal and professional interests of the student. Cross-gender mentoring relationships could be examined in a similar context utilizing assigned or unassigned mentoring with a particular emphasis on the benefits and challenges male and female mentees and mentors face when engaging in mentoring relationships.

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